



Inez Moore Tenenbaum
State Superintendent of Education

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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TO: District Superintendents
District Transportation Supervisors

FROM: Donald N. Tudor, Director
Office of Transportation

SUBJECT: School Bus Transportation To or From Day Care and Other Before- or After-School Programs

The State Department of Education (SDE) is annually appropriated state funds to transport qualified students to and from their home for the purpose of receiving state-mandated K-12 education services. The traditional belief that student trips should operate only to and from "home" has in recent years generated frequent questions from districts and parents. During the 2000 South Carolina Legislative Session, the General Assembly debated this issue and adopted the following new state statute:

56-5-196. ORIGIN OR DESTINATION FOR SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

The parents or legal guardians of a student who is eligible to receive public school bus transportation must have the option of designating a child daycare center or other before- or after-school program as the student's origin or destination for school transportation.

Students throughout South Carolina are now eligible to be taken to and from places other than their residence. Thus, a student's origin and/or destination may begin or end at a day care center, or at a variety of before- or after-school student programs.

This increased flexibility directly impacts the school district's school bus routing and scheduling program. However, school districts have the authority to establish the process and timing that parents must follow to designate their child's origin and/or destination for school transportation. The State Board of Education Regulation 43-80 (S) provides: "Each school district shall submit to the Department of Education in writing no later than May 1 of each year, any major changes in school assignments which would require a change in the number of buses for the following school year." Based on this regulation and other SDE routing procedures, district policy

August 27, 2002

may require parents to notify the district of any pickup or destination change prior to that date. Requests by parents to designate an origin and/or destination after May 1 of each year may be granted on a space available basis. Districts may also determine the frequency that parents can amend their child's origin and/or destination stop, and determine the frequency that the district will accept changes in a student's pick-up and drop-off location.

For a student to qualify for state funding of transportation services to these redefined origin or destination options, the following requirements must each be true.

1. The student is eligible for state-funded transportation as defined in the S. C. Code Ann. Section 59-67-420 and South Carolina Code Regulations 43-80.
2. The origin and/or destination is within the student's school attendance zone.

To qualify to use state-owned school buses at school district expense, the following must be true.

1. The transportation can be provided without increasing the school bus riding time of other qualified students riding the school bus.
2. The transportation can be provided without requiring additional state-owned school buses.
3. The school district is prepared to reimburse the state for any additional cost the state incurs as a result of providing the transportation service.

The SDE, working in concert with the school districts, believes that the use of school buses to provide before- or after-school student transportation service will greatly improve the travel safety of the students and better respond to parent needs.

DNT/bc